



## FOOD OFFERS BOOST RETAIL

The new food concept for IKEA's MEGA Centres

SHOPPING centres across the developed world are looking to increase their catering offer. At a time when vacancy levels are stubbornly high and mainstream retailers are reluctant to take new stores, centre owners have learned that catering operators are still in the market for new space.

And from a consumer point of view, a quality and varied catering offer can act as an important point of difference for a shopping centre. Indeed, research has shown that shoppers who stop to eat in a centre end up staying longer and spending more.

Among the restaurant brands to be showcased at MAPIC is the Italian casual-dining operator Cigierre, which operates a network of 130 directly owned or franchised restaurants under the Old Wild West, Wiener Haus, Arabian Kebab and Kukkuma brands in malls and multiplex cinemas.

Another fast-growing Italian brand is Alice Pizza. Founded in Rome in October 1990 by Italian entrepreneur Giovanni Domenico, it has grown across Italy by opening franchised stores, predominantly in shopping centres. At MAPIC, the company will be looking for partners to help it take its next step into new markets.

Similarly Hanswurst, launched in Aachen in 2011 to sell a wide selection of traditional German sausages, is using MAPIC to drive its expansion plans.

Pret A Manger, the popular UK-based sandwich chain, is attending MAPIC for the first time as it increases its international focus. From a standing start in 1986, its emphasis on fresh produce and

fast service in convenient locations has helped it to develop into a business generating €565m in annual turnover. Unlike many of its rivals, Pret A Manger does not franchise. But this has not hampered its growth and it now has 289 company stores in the UK, 50 in New York, Washington DC, Boston and Chicago, 14 in Hong Kong and 10 in Paris.

IKEA Shopping Centres Russia has developed new food court concepts and undertaken mall extensions at its MEGA branded shopping centres in order to create unique leisure spaces for visitors, particularly families, where they can gather and socialise. For example, at Moscow's MEGA Tepy Stan, the current food court is being upgraded and divided into different zones such as family, youngsters and urban to suit the needs of individual customer groups. In addition, the food court's new design is being based on a piazza, which will become a meeting point for social interaction.

In addition, an upgrade at Moscow's MEGA Khimki will incorporate a fresh food market, which along with the mall's integration with Moscow's light railway, will make it an attractive leisure destination for the local community.

Armin Michaely, IKEA Shopping Centres Russia's general director, says: "A key goal is to deliver the best choice and quality for our customers, while making food areas destinations for socialising and relaxing, and an attraction in themselves."